

# Social Media and Publication Policy 2026

## For Staff and Students

### Summary

The International British Theatre School (IBTS) recognises the value of social media as a creative and communication tool, but also the potential risks to safeguarding, reputation, and data privacy.

This policy sets clear expectations for all staff and students regarding the responsible and professional use of social media and online platforms.

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## 1. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students, parents, contractors, and visiting professionals associated with IBTS.

It covers all online communication, including posts, comments, images, and videos on:

- Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn
- Messaging services (WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal)
- Blogs, forums, and any website with user-generated content

The policy aims to:

- Protect children and young people from harm or exploitation.
- Safeguard the professional reputation of staff and IBTS.
- Ensure compliance with data protection and privacy legislation.

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## 2. Responsibilities

All users of social media connected to IBTS are expected to:

- Conduct themselves professionally and respectfully.
- Protect confidential or identifiable information about children, families, or colleagues.
- Uphold IBTS's values, safeguarding duties, and reputation both in and outside working hours.

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### 3. Social Media Rules for Staff

Staff must **not**:

- Post, comment, or share any material that could damage the reputation of IBTS, its staff, or students.
- Publish photographs, videos, or identifying information of children or venues without **written parental consent and Director approval**.
- Discuss internal issues, complaints, or student matters online.
- Accept friend or follow requests from students or parents, unless a pre-existing personal relationship existed before employment.
- Communicate with students via personal accounts, private messaging apps, or non-approved channels.
- Post discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate material.

Staff **must**:

- Set the highest privacy settings on personal accounts.
- Report any safeguarding concerns arising online to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** immediately.
- Use official IBTS channels for sharing authorised promotional content.

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action under the **Staff Conduct and Disciplinary Policy** and may result in referral to **Ofsted** or the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**.

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## 4. Social Media Rules for Students

Students must **not**:

- Share photos, videos, or information identifying other students, staff, or IBTS locations.
- Create or post IBTS-related content without permission from the Director or appointed staff.
- Send social media friend requests to staff or attempt to contact them through personal accounts.

Breaches of this policy will be addressed under the **Behaviour Management Policy 2026** and may result in suspension or exclusion from programmes.

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## 5. Official IBTS Social Media Accounts

All official IBTS social media content will be:

- Approved and monitored by the **Director or designated communications manager**.
- Posted using secure, password-protected accounts.
- Factually accurate, age-appropriate, and safeguarding compliant.

Parental consent is required for any identifiable student photographs or media. All imagery will align with the **Photography and Filming Policy 2026**.

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## 6. Data Protection and Privacy

- Personal data must never be shared online without explicit consent.
- Photos, videos, and written content must comply with the **Data Protection Act 2018** and **UK GDPR**.

- Any data breach or unauthorised post must be reported to the **Data Protection Officer** immediately.

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## 7. Monitoring and Enforcement

- IBTS reserves the right to monitor publicly available content related to its operations.
- Allegations of inappropriate online conduct will be investigated promptly and fairly.
- Depending on severity, disciplinary or safeguarding procedures may be enacted.

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## 8. Related Policies

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026**
- **Staff Conduct and Disciplinary Policy 2026**
- **Photography and Filming Policy 2026**
- **Data Protection and Privacy Policy 2026**
- **Behaviour Management Policy 2026**

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**Policy Owner:** Ben Whiteside, Director  
International British Theatre School